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SIPDIS

AF/RA - SPYKERMAN; NEA/ARP - ROBERTS; S/CT - MILLER

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SUBJECT: YEMEN: PRIORITIZATION OF CT PROGRAMS

REF: SECSTATE 112122

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull for reasons 1.5 (a, b, c and d)

1. (c) Embassy Sana'a welcomes the opportunity to engage with AF Bureau on counter-terrorism issues and on developing a more comprehensive CT strategy for the region. Post is concerned with border and maritime security as well as the movement of people and arms between Yemen and East Africa, particularly Somalia, as highlighted by the recent seizure of a dhow carrying a shipment of weapons from Yemen. As requested in reftel, below is an outline of Post's counter-terrorism (CT) programs that will boost ROYG effectiveness in combating terrorism and potential for participating in regional security cooperation.

2. (c) Post's ongoing military/counter-terrorism cooperation includes:

- counter-terrorism training and modernization for Yemeni Special Forces;
- U.S. Military Training Teams (MTTs) in country to train ground and maritime forces;
- equipment, including 8 EDA (Excess Defense Articles) patrol boats that were commissioned in April 2004, training, and guidance to establish Yemeni Coast Guard (YCG) capabilities;
- equipment and training for Yemen's Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP), the on-line system for monitoring entry and exit from all of Yemen's air, land, and sea ports. The program is currently in Phase III (of 4 phases) and has established monitoring portals at 24 border crossing points in Yemen;
- training under the Anti-terrorist Assistance (ATA) program, e.g., the Department of State and the FBI jointly sponsored a terrorist crime scene investigation training course for ROYG officials in summer 2003. Recently a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ministry of Interior (MOI) for an INL crowd control training program with Yemeni police officers;
- an interagency Export and Border Security (EXBS) team visit in December 2003; the trip report is still pending, but Yemen is slated to receive approximately \$470,000 to fund sending ROYG officials to a Senior Export Control Seminar, a workshop on controlled/dual-use items, land and sea interdiction training, and basic equipment and border patrol vehicles;
- a Department of Energy (DOE) Radiological Threat Reduction team visited in May 2004 and negotiated approximately \$47,000 in contracts for upgrades to make radiological source storage sites more secure; and

Post believes that there is real benefit to continued capacity building for both counter-terrorism forces, border control and law enforcement through all of the programs listed above and is continually exploring additional funding sources to maintain U.S. efforts.

3. (s) Post is also engaged in sensitive intelligence programs to increase cooperation and information sharing.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT: SUCCESSFUL YEMEN CT OPERATIONS

4. (c) These collaborations are producing tangible successes.

In mid-September 2003, the ROYG disrupted an al-Qaida cell operating in Sana'a, Yemen and targeting Western interests, Yemeni officials trained by the FBI during the ATA program participated in the take-down of the cell, which was headed by Afghanistan-trained 'Amr al-Sharif, who was trying to reconstitute al-Qaida in Yemen.

5. (sbu) In June 2003, the newly-formed Central Security Forces (CSF) CT unit was dispatched to the Hattat mountains in Abyan province to hunt down and bring to justice those responsible for an attack on a military medical convoy the week before. The area commander put this unit, trained by British and U.S. forces, at the lead of this effort when Ministry of Defense forces became bogged down by harassing gunfire from the surrounding hills. Over a 3-day period, the

CSF unit engaged those responsible and completed their mission. In May 2004, international forces intercepted a dhow with a substantial shipment of weapons on board; after careful negotiation the confiscated weapons were returned to the ROYG for outfitting counter-terrorism and special forces for future operations.

FUTURE EFFORTS: INCREASING MARITIME SECURITY AND REGIONAL COORDINATION ON TIP

16. (c) Post sees two key areas for increased regional/HOA cooperation: maritime security and regionalizing the TIP program. Increased Yemeni cooperation with TF-150 and regional maritime forces could contribute substantially to regional maritime security efforts since enhanced regional cooperation would better control routes and impede terrorist movements. Regionalizing the PISCES/TIP border monitoring program to allow greater information exchanges would improve the ability of all countries in the region to stem the movement of terrorists or criminals, as well as illegal immigration that contributes to the threat of terrorism. Moreover, Post believes that Yemen's leadership recognizes the need to increase contacts and coordination with its neighbors in the interest of enhancing stability and economic growth in the region, as demonstrated by Yemen's recent efforts to reach out to Ethiopia and the Sudan and create tripartite cooperation, and is likely to be receptive to the initiatives outlined above.

17. (u) Post's points of contact on this message are Counter-terrorism Coordinator Austin Gilreath, class email: gilreathag@state.sgov.gov; telephone 967-1-303-155, ext. 2356; facsimile 967-1-303-179 or Pol/Econ Chief Mary Brett Rogers; class email: rogersmb@state.sgov.gov; telephone 967-1-303-155, ext. 2236; facsimile 967-1-303-183.

HULL